



San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) San Diego

The CERT San Diego mission: *Firefighters and Citizens Working Together to Build Safer Communities*

The City of San Diego Fire-Rescue department has learned two valuable lessons from responding to disasters such as wildfires, earthquakes, floods, mudslides and terrorism events: *1) there are never enough public safety resources to get to every neighborhood quickly* and *2) citizens want to help*. An innovative new program helps meet this need: **Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)**.

The goal is to help families, neighbors, businesses and communities get through the first few hours or days following a disaster before help arrives. In the first 72 hours after a large-scale disaster, first responders may be overwhelmed, due to the magnitude of the event. The availability of CERT teams, made up of community members trained in basic disaster response, fire safety, light search and rescue, incident command organization and disaster medical operations will help neighborhoods survive. Thanks for your interest in BERT (Business Emergency Response Team) and CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) San Diego training, offered by the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department.



Business and CERT

Meet BERT (Business Emergency Response Team). CERT San Diego offers custom BERT training programs specifically for businesses on a fee basis. Firefighters, lifeguards and paramedics train these classes at your facility or ours on a time table that works for you. Or you may send employees living in the City of San Diego to our tuition-free CERT academies as space allows.

We recommend that you train as much of your employee base as possible in CERT techniques, so that regardless of where they are in a disaster, they know what to do. High-rise buildings, buildings in

dense urban areas, businesses with significant visitors or traffic and those near critical infrastructure are of key importance for CERT training. However all businesses need BERT training. BERT members augment your existing security and operations staff when it is needed most.

If a major earthquake were to strike San Diego, thousands of employees could be stranded at work, on the road or at home. Does your company have three days to three weeks of food, water and emergency supplies on hand to support your entire employee and visitor base until access and services are restored? What if the communities surrounding your business were impacted- could your BERT team step in to help? Would your employees know what to do in a disaster, at home or work? BERT volunteers could play a key role in business continuity and community survival those first few days and weeks after an unthinkable disaster. BERT trained volunteers are also better prepared for disasters occurring at home after hours; hopefully this helps free up employees to come back to work sooner.

CERT San Diego graduates receive distinctive green CERT vests and helmets and City/County -issued ID cards indicating that they are nationally accredited Disaster Service Workers (DSW's), allowed into closed areas to support the San Diego Fire-Rescue department.

For a presentation or more information on developing a CERT program at your corporation or business group, please call **Barbara Ayers, CERT Program Manager at (619) 533-3075.**



BERT academy details

We work with your company to help prepare your employees for disasters and offer intensive training academies taught in hands-on academies taught by firefighters, paramedics and lifeguards, pros with years of first person experience. Citizens and employees graduate from CERT and BERT academies as nationally certified Disaster Service Workers (DSW)—if they move, they take their certification to the new team. CERT programs have been developed across the country by Fire Departments since the 9/11 terrorist event. Our goal is to prepare all citizens for disasters, and to arm them with skills and knowledge of a safe response when emergency services are overwhelmed and your business is on its own for hours or days. Employees work within your normal chain of command as extra hands when it is needed most. Often times in disasters, communities and businesses may be on their own for days or weeks as public services are overwhelmed—and buildings and areas may be closed, crippling business continuity. The DSW ID card allows these workers to stay inside closed areas to continue their vital disaster response work. Another goal is to speed up business continuity.

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CERT San Diego is building locally managed CERT teams in business and neighborhoods throughout the city of San Diego. We can refresh your employees' skills each year in custom drills and/or they may attend our free community disaster drills as space allows.

CERT San Diego recently certified Qualcomm and SBC employees and small business owners and managers from the BID (Business Improvement District) Council in custom BERT (Business Emergency Response Team) academies. We tailor these classes to your needs. We can hold them at your facility or ours. We stage a large disaster drill at the end of the training to serve as a final exercise to put all of the skills learned together in a real disaster simulation.



CERT/BERT ACADEMIES FEES

We have two ways we teach BERT academies-- a "traditional" class which involves classroom instruction and hands-on skill stations class. These are 24 hour classes (either three 8-hour days, six 4-hour days or some other 24-hour combination that works best for your team).

We also teach a 16-hour "fast tracked" academy, which is popular with businesses. It features less classroom time, but there is a pre-requisite that must be performed to enter the class: completion of an online CERT class, which takes approximately 2-6 hours online (it can be taken in parts). This requires that students work well in advance to ensure the pre-req is completed weeks before class.

Either way, BERT class costs are based on a 50 student class-- to get the cheapest per person rate you want to fill the class with 50 people or more. You may host more than 50 students, and the only additional cost is a class materials fee for textbooks and PPE (Backpack with CERT green helmet and vest, goggles, medical gloves, work gloves, dust mask and flashlight) for each person up to a maximum class of 75 (space allowing).

Class fees include program management, firefighter/paramedic/area expert instructors, instruction materials, props, textbooks, class supplies, class rosters, student ID cards, intensive disaster drill, graduation certificate, use of facilities and CERT backpacks (Personal Protective Equipment).

We may utilize the San Diego Fire-Rescue Training facility near San Diego airport for all of the classes or just the disaster drill final, whichever works best for you. Or you may buy your own PPE and deduct \$40 per person from the base fees, which are approximately \$364 per student.

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Strategic Partnerships for training

You may also split academies with other businesses if you do not have 50 students or if you hope to share costs and stimulate regional collaboration. It is also possible to open up these academies to add community members living in the area as a goodwill gesture to the nearby neighborhoods.

Please note that we do offer three tuition-free academies to residents of the City of San Diego on a space available basis, after hours, each year. These academies fill up quickly but it may offer a chance to augment your training efforts. These classes are offered after work hours, on weekday evenings and Saturday mornings. A schedule for an upcoming "tuition free" class is available online at www.CERTsandiego.org.

We also can explore a Train the Trainer option for you so that we may train your BERT management staff enabling you to continue to train your own employees after an initial BERT academy.



For information: www.CERTsandiego.org (619) 533-3075 Email: BGAYers@sandiego.gov